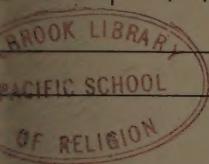


THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER

VOLUME 1

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MAY, 1954

THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS DONE

NOTE: The following, much abbreviated,* is from a precious record of the founding of the church at Campton, N. H., 1773, by town vote and some of the steps taken by the town, in town meetings, to settle a minister, taken from the historical address given at the 100th anniversary 1873, by Rev. Quincy Blakely. This church continues unto this day.

AT a legal town meeting at the house of Col. Joseph Spencer, on Thursday, January 7, 1773, — “Voted, to Choose a Committee to procure a minister to preach the Next Summer, the Said Committee to Have power to provide a minister to preach in Said town three months, and any Necessaries for Said Minister at the Cost of the Town.” (No minister secured).

Town meeting, Nov. 15, 1773, — “Voted to procure, If May Be, a Minister to preach with us Next Summer, have him come at May, 1774.” At town-meeting March 15, 1774, “Voted, that the Committee Shall apply to Mr. Selden Church according to his proposals to preach two months with us.”

From the “Selectmen’s Warrant (the call and agenda) for town-meeting, to be holden May 26, 1774,” — “Then and there, after a Moderator is chosen, to act on the following particulars: 1st. To See what Method the Town will come into and Defray the Charges which have arisen or May arise from Mr. Church’s preaching in Said Town. 2d. To See if the Town will Come into Some Method To Settle a Gospel Minister. 3. To See if the town will Give Mr. Selden Church a Call for Settlement in Said town, and Choose a Committee to treat with him as they Shall Receive orders from Said Town.”

“Voted, (town-meeting May 26, 1774) to raise on grant one hundred and five pounds lawful money’s worth in labor and provision at cash price for the settlement of a minister, to be paid in four years, one fourth part annually.”

Town meeting August 29, 1774, — “Voted, to give Mr. Selden Church a call for settlement in this place. “Voted, that whereas, we agree that the ministerial office is of divine institution, for the Edifying and guiding of his church, and to continue to the end of the world; and they who are called to this office ought to be endowed with competent learning, ministerial gifts, as also with the grace of God, sound in judgment, not a novice in the faith and knowledge of gospel, without scandal, of a holy conversation, and such as devote themselves to the work and service thereof; being thus agreed in the internal qualifications and outward acquirements of Mr. Selden Church, we hereby vote and call him to the pastoral charge of this town and congregation here, so long as he shall continue in the faith and order of the Gospel.” (Note: Mr. Church accepted the call as settled pastor.)

“Voted, to give Mr. Selden Church the cutting and hauling of thirty cords of wood yearly; which is to be cut about eight feet long, providing he shall find the

* Spelling, capitalization and punctuation as in original.

same. This is done exclusive of his other salary, so long as he shall continue to be our minister." The salary of Mr. Church, in the commencement of his ministry was seventy-six pounds and five shillings lawful money, and the cutting and hauling of thirty cords of wood.

(The town, having settled a minister, proceeded at once to secure a meeting-house.) Dec. 5, 1774, the town "Voted to build a meeting-house 35 feet wide and 45 feet long." "Voted, to raise 65 pounds lawful money on the levy, or a rate to be taken in 1775, in order to build said house."

At a meeting a week later,— "Voted, to raise four pounds, ten shillings, lawful money, (about \$15) to purchase one acre and a half of land to set the meeting-house on." At the March meeting the same year (after a storm),—"Voted, that the selectmen repair the meeting-house on the town's cost."

Mr. Blakely comments, "When Mr. Church married Miss Mary Baker, Oct. 14, 1779, and the fact became generally known, the house-warming that followed was an occasion greatly enjoyed by the people, some pleasing reminiscences of which were related for long years."

"Some of the people living at a great distance from the place of public worship, and who came to meeting either on foot or with ox-teams, were wont to think that his sermons would have been improved if they had been shortened,— no complaint with regard to the matter of them; it was to their length that objection was made. He was a man of sterling character, endowed with wisdom, and an earnest worker, to have been so successful through so long a pastorate (17 years) amid such difficulties as he had to encounter."

Selden Church born East Haddam, Conn., April 13, 1744; graduated Yale College, 1765; studied theology with Rev. Enoch Huntington of Middletown, Conn.; ordained Campton, N. H., Oct. 26, 1774; dismissed, 1791; died in Northumberland, July 14, 1802.

VALUABLE BOOKS RECEIVED

Recently *The Early History of the Campton, N. H. Church* from Miss Bertha E. Blakely, South Hadley, Mass. (See page 1.)

Also, valuable books from Mrs. H. Paul Douglass, Upper Montclair, N. J.; Dr. Warren H. Denison, Grinnell, Iowa; Mr. H. H. Sellers, Columbus, Ohio. These books are being placed in safekeeping and add to our inheritance. We hope all our people will be on the lookout for such treasures.

BOOKS WANTED

Barton, "A Law of Congregational Usage"
Dale, "History of English Congregationalism"
Dexter, "Congregationalism: What it is, etc."
"A Handbook of Congregationalism"
Roy, "A Manual of the Principles"
Walker, "The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism"

These and other history books, greatly needed by pastors and students, are resting unseemly in churches or attics. Why not put them to good use now? The office will gladly be the distributor agent.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

From time to time erroneous statements made in the public press, magazines or books concerning persons or matters related to history. We need a group of informed persons who will, "in a letter to the Editor" copy the statement or who will send to the Society's office a clipping, giving name and date of publication, and corrections will be sent the publisher immediately. Let us be factual and fair!

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIANS

Since our last issue we have received names of 38 church historians. This is good. We wish additional names to complete the list. There is a fine cooperative task for these workers!

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

Churches and organizations desiring speakers for historical occasions are invited to write names and addresses of Fellows of this Society who are competent in this field and who are willing to help.

"STANDING ORDER" IN NEW ENGLAND

The early New England churches looked upon the maintenance of the church as a civic duty. So the voters of the community (later the town) raised by taxation funds for erecting the meeting-house and for church expenses, and called a pastor, fixing his compensation by town vote. In some colonies (later states) this was known as the *Standing Order*. The story on the page of this issue illustrates by actual record early procedures. The New England churches were in fact established churches. This condition obtained in Vermont to 1807, in New Hampshire to 1819, in Connecticut to 1831, and in Maine and Massachusetts to 1834.

DR. MOREY'S ADDRESS

This address, *History Corrects Itself*, given at the last meeting of this Society, is now in print. The sub-title, "Robert Browne and Congregational Beginnings," indicates its theme. A valuable study. Copies may be had from the Society office at 15¢ prepaid.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

When the General Council meets at New Haven June 23-30, the Historical Society will report through its President, Dr. Arthur H. Bradford, for the biennium. At that time the President will also accept in the name of the Society, as a permanent treasure of the fellowship, the Original Manuscripts of the Minutes of the first and second meetings of the National Council held in 1871 and '74; also the gavel long used by the General Convention of the Christian Church, a souvenir of *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, the first religious newspaper to be published in America. This early paper (1808) is now merged in *Advance*, which gives it authority to number its current issue Volume 146.

FOR YOUR HISTORY FILE

As our denomination has no official historical journal for publishing new material concerning our history, students and others will find herewith documents of highest value:

Restoration of Worcester Cemetery with new material on early mission work in the Cherokee Nation, T. L. Ballenger, *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, Summer '53, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Okla.

American Protestantism During the Revolutionary Epoch, Sidney E. Mead, *Church History*, Dec. '53, American Society of Church History, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

Marcus Whitman, Pioneer Missionary, M. Drury; also

Presbyterianism in New England Congregationalism, P. T. McClurkin, *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* (Dec. '53), Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia.

Clip this item and file for reference.

FOREFATHERS' DAY

The Committee of Advisers of the Society has approved the suggestion that our churches observe the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving Day, which this year is November 21, as Forefathers' Day. Program materials are being prepared by a committee headed by Rev. Clifford O. Simpson, Manchester, Conn. We suggest that pastors begin now to think of the best way to remind our people of the value of true and vital religion to maintain the freedoms our fathers secured for us. Let us make this a great day of remembrance and high resolution.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHURCH HISTORIANS

The following outline of work for local church historians is from Lettie B. Ritchie, long-time historian, now retired, of the church at Royalton, Waupaca Co., Wis.

1. The keeping of a complete file of Church Bulletins and printed programs of special meetings.
2. The keeping of a scrapbook of clippings concerning the church, church members, and of special events.
3. The helping of the minister or church school officials to plan definite history study for some period of the year to cover in different years, such topics as General Church History, The Churches in the U. S. A., The Study of Our Own Denomination, and of other denominations, especially those represented in the community; our own mission agencies, our state conferences and mission fields.
4. To plan an occasional program for a church group on the topic *What Is New in World Religion*.
5. To plan an observance of the founding of the church.
6. To assist the church clerk, if desired, to prepare a report of the church's life for the year for the annual church meeting, which report to be carefully preserved.
7. To collect and place in safekeeping valuable historical books, records, keepsakes.
8. To assist in the circulation of denominational and other histories, denominational magazines and national agency reports.
9. To keep a list of ministers of the church with information, and also a list of young persons who have gone into religious work from the church.

Perhaps other church historians have suggestions or comments — correspondence desired as we begin to plan a program for this department.

CONGREGATIONAL COMPLACENCY AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Our forefathers not only made history but were keenly aware of its value. Robinson, Winthrop, Hooker, Bradford, Wise, and many others were historians as well as pioneers. Dexter's famous annotated catalog lists 7,250 Congregational historical books and pamphlets published from 1564 to 1879. The valuable material produced since should be collected before it is too late.

This neglect of our history is due in part to the fact that during the last century we have been so deeply involved in the changing conditions of American life that we have been gradually losing our historical perspective. The pressure of immediate tasks has made it difficult adequately to record our history as it was being made and has obscured our sense of historical responsibility to future generations. We have left our history too much in the keeping of secular writers who have not always accorded due deference to the values herein. We have become somewhat complacent towards our heritage. There is an old Chinese proverb, "The house wherein a leading family lives needs no name on the gate post." We share to some degree this attitude towards our ancestral home.

The time has come to be more mindful of our history. Our people need realize afresh that they stand in a worthy tradition. Like our fathers, we today have a responsibility for the religious and moral health of all men and for the well-being of society. A knowledge of their service will do us no hurt but will strengthen us for this present and the days ahead in this task; to strengthen and to undergird the religious, social and political life of our nation, all our people are invited to cooperate.

F. L. F.

The Purpose of the Congregational Christian Historical Society is to cultivate a deeper interest in the history of the Congregational Christian Churches in all its aspects, and a greater awareness of the importance of Congregational Christian recorded history as a source of information and of inspiration, and as a basis for future action.

Sec. 34.65(e), P.
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